

But the first criteria was do they have the skills to get the job done? And I think in some cases that is maybe where the Secretary is just moving off track here, is we have got to work with our kids to make sure they know the basics before we move on to some of these other issues.

Mr. SCHAFFER. I think these nutty ideas that come out of the Clinton-Gore administration provide a more clear emphasis on the need for choice, for parental choice, for parental involvement in academic settings. That is frankly where the liberals in the Democrat Party and the more moderate and conservative Members who are on the Republican side of the aisle differ with respect to our approach on education. We on the Republican side genuinely believe that we can trust parents. We genuinely believe that when you elect a local school board member to make decisions about what the curriculum should be, about how much a teacher should be paid, about whether a scarce tax dollar should be spent buying a new bus or repairing the roof or maybe giving the teacher a pay raise, that those are the folks that can be trusted.

We do not need to be second-guessing them every day here in Washington, D.C. That is the real battle that takes place. It is unfortunate that so often it is misrepresented in the press or by our opponents or the media, in other words. Our goals are probably fundamentally the same. We want to build an education system in America that helps children. We favor a decentralized model that is decentralized right down to the last school, even beyond that, even for those who want to educate their children in their own homes, in their church school, or wherever they want to educate them. We want to allow this marketplace of competitive ideas to take place, versus our Democrat friends, the Clinton-Gore model of centralized authority here in Washington where left-wing ideas out of their bureaucratic agencies come to define the failing terms for children all across America.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I think what we are also saying is that by empowering parents, that if in the local community you have got a school superintendent or a school that says, our model and our priorities, we are going to match what the Department of Education, what Secretary Riley is promoting, our school is going to focus on relationships, resiliency and readiness; and if you have got another school saying we are focused on the basics and when your children leave our school, they are going to be at class proficiency or grade proficiency in reading, writing and math and, as a matter of fact, our objective is to have your kids at one or two levels above grade proficiency in each of those areas, a parent at that point in time should have the option of saying, for what I really want for my kids, that is the school I want to go to. Maybe some will choose the Sec-

retary's model, and they will have the opportunity to go to that type of school. But we should not have a top-down approach from Washington saying this is what every school district is going to focus on.

Mr. SCHAFFER. You mentioned earlier, in 3 weeks the U.S. Department of Education is going to announce that they have failed another audit, that once again they have done a poor job of accounting for the billions, almost \$130 billion that they manage, that they cannot account for it very well, the kind of audit that would result in a private company's stock crashing through the floor.

Yet our Department of Education, after coming to Congress and saying we cannot audit our books, then when they did bring us an audit for the subsequent year, 1999, they got an F. Now they are going to bring us another audit that they will fail again. That is a tragic event. It is important to note, though, because what such rampant and wholesale mismanagement of funds really represents is, one, a tremendous amount of sacrifice by the American people who work hard to pay taxes and send them here to Washington, D.C. in hopes that we are going to do something responsible with them. Secondly, it suggests that people in Washington do not take those tax dollars seriously. Third, it suggests that people in Washington do not take the children seriously who are affected by this waste, fraud and abuse in the Department of Education.

Finally, what it suggests is that there are billions of dollars that American taxpayers send to Washington, D.C. that will never get near a child, who like every child in America is repeatedly exploited by the bureaucracy here in Washington to get one more dollar out of the taxpayers' pocket for the children. Yet some of those folks over there have no intention of doing anything different that will result in those dollars really helping children. That is what we are here to try to fix. That is what we want to help. As we travel around the country, that is what we hear school board members say. They do not say, spend more on education. They say, get the money to us. We know what we are doing. We are trained for this. We are elected for this. We know your children and we are professionals. Just get us the money and get out of the way and we will produce results. And when we do that, we know that they are right. Schools do perform better when they have fewer strings, fewer regulations, fewer government agents and bureaucrats snooping around in their files and in their classrooms and getting in the way.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. And they will have a clean audit.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Yes. And with fewer responsibilities and more dollars passing through to the States and the school districts, it will be easier for the, I do not know how many accountants, hundreds of accountants over

there in the Department of Education to be able to come back to this Congress and say, the money got to children, we can show you, we can prove it, congratulations, job well done. We are a long way from that goal, but that is our dream.

□ 1730

I am about ready to yield back the balance of my time, and I did not know if my colleague from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFFER) wanted to talk about any other issues tonight.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, there is one topic I would like to bring up only because we have adjourned and there is no business left for the rest of the week, and we will be back next week; but I wanted to point out a piece of legislation that was introduced by the Democrats prior to our 1-month recess. It was a bill introduced on July 19 by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

This is a bill, and I will just read the title of it, it is H.R. 4892, to repeal the Federal charter of the Boy Scouts of America. This is a bill, Mr. Speaker, I hope we will all focus on and look at its pernicious motives and also take a look at the legislation's effort to try to pull the rug out from underneath one of the most important civic charitable organizations in our country, the Boy Scouts of America.

This is a bill that is designed to end the Boy Scouts of America. This is an organization that for many, many years, I think 1916 was the year the Scouts was started, I have some statistics on the organization, 90 years ago, that for many, many years has trained and nurtured many young boys and has taught them to become responsible young men and adults in our community and in our society; and because of the intolerance, because of the bigotry of some Members of Congress, they have seen fit to go on a rampage to try to eliminate the Boy Scouts of America and revoke their charter.

It is irresponsible, and I hope it is something that our President and Vice President and others will speak out on and let us know where their sentiments lie, what their positions are, where they stand with respect to the Boy Scouts of America.

I have one son who is a member of the Boy Scouts. It is a remarkable organization that has made a dramatic difference in his life. And this is all about the Boy Scout charter and its mission to try to promote the morals and values and teaching skills that will help them throughout their lifetimes.

And for anyone here in this Congress or throughout the rest of the country to attack the Scouts for such a noble mission is just inexcusable and one that I assure all of those Scouts who are concerned about the issue and others who are concerned about the future of the Boy Scouts that there are many Members of Congress that will rise and come to the aid of this important organization.